

Our Himalayas.

Our Lord has identified Himself with the Himalayas among the mountains in the Bhagavad Gita. Remembering this, the poet Kalidasa declared that the mountain's immobile form could be identified with Vishnu, for exactly like him, the mountain contained all the moving and stationary creatures besides supporting them. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the poet describes the mountain as possessing two forms, mobile and immobile. The mobile form, he declared, became purified by acting as the servant of the Seven Sages, while his stationary form was divested of its dress by being rubbed with the dust of their feet.

The Brahmins had, slightly prior, explained that the Vedic mantras referring to the speech of the waters had to be explained as the ^{speech of the} presiding deities of the waters. Valmiki had also described in the beginning of the Sundara Kanda that Mainaka, the son of Himavan, who had preserved his wings intact by hiding inside the ocean, came out of the ocean in his golden body and requested Hanuman to partake of the fruits he had brought. This form of the presiding deity of the mountain was also possessed by Himavan according to the opening sloka of his epic Ramarasambhava.

We will not be guilty of making an overstatement if we say that Bharatarya Samskrit or Culture embodied itself into this mountain and stands permanently aloft for eternity. Kalidasa has also referred to this though suggestively when he declared in the very opening verse of the Kumarasambhava that the mountain stands as a measuring rod for the earth. Poetic convention refers conveniently to fame as being white in colour; the snow on the mountain also is milky white and so the imagination of the poet could easily conceive the identity of both. The fame of the mountain could spread as far as the sky and the height of the tall peaks was also lost in the clouds. The poet declared that the height of the peaks was only equalled by the figurative height of the mind. The poetic fancy was

stretched further. The mountain was conceived as the King of all the mountains on the earth. If the Kings on the earth were recognised by the CHAAMARAs, waved before them when they came out in public, this King^{divine} had also such chaamaras waved before him by the CHAMAREE deer themselves. The CHAAMARAs waved before the earthly Kings were the tails of the deer (which must have been killed while cutting them) fitted with a golden or silver handle and given to paid hirelings who had to wave them; but this Himalayan King, according to Kalidasa, did not employ any servants for the purpose; unbidden, the deer waved them day in and day out, proclaiming for eternity the royal title of the King.

In a similar way, there were the KASTURI or musk deer, which also unbidden, rubbed their NAABHI GANDHA or musk on every rock on the mountain and made it sweetscented. As though ~~not satisfied~~ ^{thinking that} with this sweetscent, was not enough, the elephants rubbed their cheeks (to remove the itching sensation) against the scented Surala trees and the perfume spread itself throughout the forest regions. The hollows of the bamboo issued a shrill note resembling the flute while evacuating the wind inside and this became the SHRUTI or the accompanying tune for the excellent vocal music of the KINNAREES; the whole forest thus provided music concerts in every nook and corner. Nature, besides dedicating herself to the mountain King's service heart and soul, looked to the Comfort of the Apsaras who dwelling there by holding aloft a mirror in the mount KAILAASA, so that the ladies could arrange their hair and prepare their toilet every day. Not satisfied with this fanciful conception of the mountain as TRIDASHAVANITA DARPANA, the poet imagines that the mountain was the solidified mass of the turbulent laughter of SIVA right from the beginning of Creation. In one word, the pleasure of heaven and earth could be found together in that mountain and every person could find mental peace only there.

We can easily believe that the mountain provided the necessary inspiration for the poetry of this great poet. If wordsworth's heart leapt with joy at the sight of a rainbow in the sky, this poet's heart also leapt with joy when he saw a peacock, a cloud or a river or a swan in the Himalayan mountain. His Raghuvamsha

opens with the scene of Vasistha's Ashrama in that mountain.
The Kumarasambhava is throughout devoted to the description
of the ashramas of Siva and Parvati there alone. The Sakuntala
starts with the description of Kanva's hermitage and ends with
the reunion in Maricha's hermitage. The fourth act of the Vikram
orvasiya describes Purnavasa wandering as a lunatic in the
wild forest regions of the GANDHAMAADANA range of the very
mountain. The best of the poetic fancies in the Meghaduta was
conceived in the lofty ranges of that very mountain. ~~Although the~~
existing poetic conception regarding the mountain is found
in the last sloka of the 15th canto in the Raghuvamsha
where the poet imagines that Hanuman and Vibhishana
- the two persons that never die according to our mythical lore
- were stationed behind by Rama when his Avatara's mission
was over, one in the Northern Himalayan mount and the other in the
Southern mountain in Lanka and these stand out for eternity as
his Permanent Victory Memorials.

The dark specks of the clouds against the back
ground of the azure evening sky must have fired his poetic
imagination many a time as is clear from its description
in one of the opening verses of the Kumarasambhava. Similarly
the rich iridescent peacock's tail in the Himalayan forest
must have attracted his attention just as it won the admiration
of the hunting Dasharatha. He also adverts to ^{the admiration} it in the Megha-
duta, comparing it to the peacock's feather on Krishna's head.
In one word, the Devadarn or the SARALA tree, KASTURI
and the CHAMARI deer, the parrot or the pigeon and similar
animals and trees on the mountain drew forth his best poetic conce-
ptions.

As a result of the exemplary penance of his
daughter Parvati, this divine Himalaya King became the father
in-law of the highest God Siva, to subsequently become the Grand-
father of another Great God, Skanda who led the armies of the gods
to victory and established universal happiness on the earth. This
is the story of his epic Kumarasambhava. The poet mentions that
by virtue of the penances of Parvati having been performed in that
peak as a result of which she obtained Siva as her husband, the
peak became henceforward famous as GAURASHIKHARA.

but it is our everlasting shame that in the days of our semi-
-hide to the British, we allowed the name of this highest peak
to be changed to Everest, ^{after} the British revenue official who
carried out the survey of the surrounding forest region. The
poet himself if he were alive today would have been the first
to point to this servile attitude. Every spot on the mountain has
become hallowed for us as the place where Sages like Nara, Narada,
Narayana and others practised penance and attained perfection.
The mountain must be deemed as the source of all our richest
treasures; it must be worshipped as the sanchin sanctorum
of the temple of the presiding deities of our land. We will be
failing in our duty if we do not resolve to protect even
the smallest inch of land on that mountain with our last
dying breath.

Gandhi's mind always equated Indian
culture with the highest Himalayan peak and ~~even~~
the slightest swerving from that lofty ideal was always
tantamount to a "Himalayan blunder" for him. In fact
Himalaya and India, ^{and evolved} were convertible terms for that
highly cultured soul who tried to identify himself with
each and every aspiration of the Indian Villager.

Considering all these benevolent aspects of the
divine mountain which provided almost all the requisites
necessary for the sacrifices in Ancient India. Brahma of his own
accord, directed the sacrificers to ^{earnmark b.} ~~apportion~~ of the sacrificial
offerings to him along with Indra and others. The mythical mountain
Mere of the Puranas with the Sun traversing round it might possess
higher peaks, but it did not, in any way, enter into the daily life
of the Indian and Himavan easily outstripped him and was
designated the King of the mountains by Kalidasa.